



PRESS RELEASE

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Digital radio reaches a tipping point in Europe - broadcasters call for digital radio as standard in cars

- **Digital switchover is starting in Europe with Norway the first to see a firm date (2017)**
- **With DSO announced, the broadcast industry is asking automotive manufacturers to put digital radio in vehicles as standard to ensure continuity for drivers travelling through Europe**
- **The switch-on of the first DAB+ commercial multiplex in Belgium underlines the increase of services on-air throughout Europe**

At the WorldDMB European Automotive Event held today in Brussels, broadcasters from across Europe called for digital radio to be fitted as standard in all cars to give drivers access to the benefits of digital radio services.

The last six months have seen a stream of political developments across Europe in support of digital radio:

- Norway was the first country in the world to confirm digital switchover in 2017 – followed by Switzerland in 2020-24.
- In Germany, the public broadcasters (ARD) have confirmed a long term commitment to DAB+ and the BMVI, Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, has established a cross-industry Steering Board to ensure progress.
- UK government support has seen a further extension in DAB road coverage, and a second multiplex will go on air in 2016. Denmark has announced a new roadmap for digital radio moving to DAB+. The Netherlands will also continue to roll out new regional multiplexes.
- In Italy and Poland coverage continues to increase, while the French regulator is beginning a consultation on the second wave of cities to adopt digital radio, after Paris, Nice and Marseille.

Digital radio coverage levels are now approaching FM equivalence – reaching 99% of the population in Norway and Switzerland, over 95% in Denmark, the UK and Netherlands, 91% in Germany and 68% in Italy.

At today's conference broadcasters presented the joint initiatives taken in countries around Europe to ensure digital radio for drivers.

Patrick Hannon, President, WorldDMB, said: *“Digital radio has reached a tipping point in Europe. The first countries have confirmed Digital Switchover dates and political commitment towards digital radio is building in many other markets. Digital radio offers significant benefits to drivers. The technology is tried and tested. Now is the time for car manufacturers to embrace the opportunity.”*

Dietrich Schirm, Director ICT and Telecommunication Division, Bavarian State Ministry for Economic Affairs and Media, Energy and Technology, said in his presentation, *“Germany is strongly in support of digital radio. Our broadcasters and automotive manufacturers are working on making it a successful experience for drivers. Recent political support for digital radio will ensure a smooth transition to digital which benefits the German auto and broadcast industries and the individual driver.”*

The conference opened with Sven Gatz, Flemish Minister for Culture, Belgium switching on the first DAB+ commercial multiplex, he said “It is my great pleasure to be here today to switch on digital radio in the Flemish region of Belgium. The Flemish radio market is remarkably strong, with 4.2m listeners everyday which is the second highest listening rate in Europe. Digitalisation brings more comfort to the media user...I am ecstatic about the work the private sector has undertaken to go digital which is alongside work taking place by the public broadcaster. Digital radio brings even better audio quality, more space and capacity and reduces the environmental impact of radio. I am happy this launch is taking place at the WorldDMB Automotive Event as we know most listening takes place in the car.”

Broadcasters also called for the European Commission to ensure that sufficient spectrum remains for digital radio services. It was agreed that it is essential that Band III continues to be the dedicated digital radio band for Europe. The event was attended by a number of Commission officials and in the year of WRC-15 the focus on keeping radio spectrum for radio was highlighted by a number of speakers from different countries.

The conference was attended by 200 automotive sector and broadcast industry experts from across 20 countries. A full meeting report of this event will be available on the WDMB website. WorldDMB members will be able to access presentations from this event in the Members Area of the [WorldDMB website](#).

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[Download the DAB/DAB+ digital radio automotive infographic](#)

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